

BOARD OF REGISTERD NURSING
INITIAL STATEMENT OF REASONS

Hearing Date: April 5, 2004

Subject Matter of Proposed Regulations: Public Health Nurse Qualifications and Requirements

Section Affected: 1491

Specific Purpose of each adoption, amendment, or repeal:

The purpose of the regulatory proposal is to establish, in regulation, the minimum educational standards, including theory and clinical experience, for issuance of a Public Health Nurse Certificate to registered nurses. The specific changes include:

1. Specifying the minimum theoretical content. [Add new section 1491(4).]
2. Requiring a supervised clinical experience, coordinated by a faculty member in the nursing program and occurring in a public health setting, as a component of public health nursing coursework. [Amend sections 1491(1), 1491(2), 1491(3) and add section 1491(5).]
3. Establishing minimum requirements for clinical experience including at least 90 hours of supervised clinical experience in a public health setting concurrent with or following acquisition of basic theoretical knowledge. [Add section 1491(6).]

Editorial changes are made in sections 1491(1), 1491(2), and 1491(3), and existing section 1491(4), which is also renumbered as 1491(7).

Factual Basis/Rationale:

Existing law (Business & Professions Code Section 2818) authorizes the Board of Registered Nursing to issue public health nurse certificates to registered nurses who meet conditions and qualifications established by the Board. The education and training requirements for the public health certificate are specified in Section 1491 of the California Code of Regulations and include three methods of certification:

1. Possession of a baccalaureate degree in nursing from a nursing school that is accredited by a Board-approved accrediting agency.

2. Possession of a baccalaureate degree in nursing from a school of nursing that is not accredited by a Board-accrediting agency but which the Board has determined has equivalent coursework in public health nursing.
3. Possession of a baccalaureate degree in a field other than nursing and completion of a specialized public health nursing program at a baccalaureate school of nursing accredited by a Board-approved accrediting agency.

The Board established educational standards for the specialized public health nursing programs that were also applied to baccalaureate programs that were not accredited by a Board-approved accrediting agency. The standards include theoretical content and concurrent clinical experience in public health. Based on input from Directors of Nursing of California Public Health Departments and California baccalaureate nursing (BSN) programs, the educational standards were revised to reflect current knowledge and clinical experience required for the practice of public health nursing. A survey of BSN programs showed that the supervised clinical experience in public health nursing ranged from 90-225 hours; the average was 142 for schools on semester system and 120 for those on the quarter system. (Exhibit 1) The proposed regulatory amendments codify the educational standards for public health nursing by delineating the minimum theoretical content and clinical experience that must be met for an applicant to be issued a public health nurse certificate.

Editorial changes are also made to enhance clarity and to provide consistency.

Underlying Data:

Technical, theoretical or empirical studies or reports relied upon (if any): None

Business Impact:

 X This regulation will not have a significant adverse economic impact on businesses. This initial determination is based on the following facts or evidence/documents/testimony:

The Board has made an initial determination that the proposed regulatory action would have no significant statewide adverse economic impact directly affecting business, including the ability of California businesses to compete with businesses in other states. The regulatory proposal affects registered nurses and nursing programs and not businesses.

 Description of alternatives which would lessen any significant adverse impact on business:

Specific Technologies or Equipment:

 X This regulation does not mandate the use of specific technologies or equipment.

 This regulation mandates the use of specific technologies or equipment. Such mandates or prescriptive standards are required for the following reasons:

Consideration of Alternatives:

No reasonable alternative to the regulation would be either more effective in carrying out the purpose for which the action is proposed or would be as effective and less burdensome to affected private persons than the proposed regulation.